

PERSONAL LIFE HISTORY OF J. BERKELEY LARSEN

My parents' first home was an adobe three-room house for which my father and a hired man made the adobes. It was situated in the west part of Mt. Pleasant, Utah, facing east on the west most street of the town. Here I was born to Andrew Larsen and Christina Mathiassen on February 27, 1889, being their 3rd child.

The 1st child in the family was Andrew Larsen, Jr., born September 17, 1885, who lived only a short time. The 2nd child was my sister, Mary LaTressa, born December 6, 1886.

My father was digging a well on our place in the month of February, the year that I was born. When the digging reached a depth of some forty or fifty feet a large sand stone in the middle of the well almost blocked further progress. Finally chains were secured around the rock and it was hauled up to the surface and the digging went on. A neighbor came over to visit and casually picked up a sledge hammer and idly began tapping on the rock, when, on a sudden, it split in two and from a cavity in the stone a large toad rolled out. It was a bright sunshiny day and the toad finally roused up and hopped away.

While we lived at this place, my father engaged in the sheep business. He came home one evening late, hung his six-shooter on the porch and the next morning it was gone. My brother, Jacob Raphael Larsen was also born in this home on April 6, 1892.

We moved from this place to a home my father purchased from Cyrus H. Wheellock (incidentally, he is the man who gave a pocket pistol to the prophet Joseph Smith when the prophet was imprisoned at Carthage Jail) at 3rd South and State Street when I was six years old.

While I was still very young I contracted pneumonia and almost died. I was saved only by the prayer and administration of my uncle, James Larsen.

We moved to our next home, a red brick structure, which my father built next door south of the Wheelock house. This was my home until I moved to Idaho in February, 1910. Here my next brother Joseph Faireld, was born on March 4, 1896. When he was less than a year old my father left for a mission for the church to the northern states. He labored nearly his entire time in Wisconsin. While he was away the baby had pneumonia and was very sick. I remember very well my mother praying for his recovery and also for President Wilson Woodruff and President Lorenzo Snow.

The next child in the family was Loren Croft (named Croft for my father's missionary companion, Edward Woolley Croft) born June 29, 1899.

On June 14, 1903, my 2nd sister, Ina, was born in this same home, and on July 23, 1905, another brother, Lon Theodore, was born.

While my father was on his mission, our only means of transportation was a black billy goat with bright red harness and very wonderful cart. I would go to the store for groceries and to the mill and bring home a hundred lbs. of flour which I would hold while Monarck that was the goat's name, as suggested by my favorite teacher, Margaret Reynolds, trotted along at a pretty good clip.

I recall being down in the corral at our first home place and my father was taking care of some sheep, some were sick. Father would lift their heads up into the hay manger. My uncle, James Larsem, came over and said, "Andrew, you're just wasting your time. They will only die anyway."

I was attempting on one occasion to put a handle in an axe and, not knowing too well the proper procedure, I had my brother, Faireld, holding the axe on a block and I was attempting to guide the handle into the eye of the axe when the hammer I was using

flew off the handle and struck Faireld on the bridge of the nose. The doctor said if he had been hit any higher or to either side, he might have been killed. He still carries the scar.

One time Faireld went down to feed the cows and after throwing the hay down from the stack, he threw the fork down. It lit handle first with the tines up against the stack. He then slid down and was caught on the fork. One time ran through the upper part of his leg and he couldn't get down. He yelled and cried until I heard him and went to his rescue. I was forced to pull the fork out of his leg after getting him down on the ground.

When I was about 10 or 11 years old, we had a young Danish immigrant working for us. Father sent us down in the field for a load of hay. We told the man to put the lines on the ladder where we could reach them, but he took his own advice and tied them down on the corner of the rack. When the hay was almost loaded the horses ran away with my brother Raphe and me up on the load with no way to hold or guide the horses. We became frightened and jumped off the load and in doing so, my brother broke his left leg just $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the hip joint.

About his same time I was given a pair of black patten leather shoes. I insisted on having them, they shone so bright, etc. But they were too small and hurt my feet, so one day I took them up in the attic and put them between the floor and the ceiling lath. I don't remember how I accounted for their loss but that was the last time I ever saw them.

When I returned home from my first day at school, my mother asked me how I liked it and who was my teacher. I told her, "I don't like school. I don't know who my teacher is. I don't like her either. She scares me, she has great big eyes."

My father's step father had a small farm just west of our place and when he passed in his wagon going to his field, my cousin, Anthony Poulson, and I would sometimes get to ride with him. My paternal grandmother lived just one block east of our home, and very often she would have all of our families at her place. She had a large cookstove on the front of which she would fit a large griddle in which was about two dozen little round depressions and into which she put batter and when it was cooked on one side she would turn it over and when cooked on the other side, each cake came out a little round ball which was rolled in sugar and handed to one of the grandchildren who stood anxiously waiting to enjoy this Danish delicacy, avelsquer.

One winter, when my father went on the desert with the sheep, he hired a young immigrant boy to stay with us at home to do the chores. I slept with him for a few nights and the next thing I knew, I was scratching my head until I was almost frantic, because one evening my aunt, Sophia Poulson, my father's half-brothers' wife was at our home and she and mother discovered that I had head lice. The immigrant boy was already in bed and my mother was so mad she forced him to get up, dress, and leave. He denied being licey, but he was, and we had to burn some of my clothing and boil all of the rest and all of the bedding, etc. It caused quite a furor but we came out of it alright.

My maternal grandmother lived a block north and a block west of our home in a home my father and her son Chris Mathiassen purchased for her, and I enjoyed very much visiting with her. She taught me a little smattering of Danish, as she never learned to talk English. She was very apt at cording, spinning and knitting wool into wonderful, warm, stockings for us children and she always had candy or lump sugar or something to give us when we visited her.

While living at this home I enjoyed the first sleigh ride that I remember. It was a onehorse sleigh built of planks by my father. He took my sister and me with him out to Hunter's (A place about 2½ miles from our house)

One day my cousin Anthony Poulson, who lived next door to us, attempted to take my little express wagon over to his place. We lifted it over the fence and when it fell down on the other side it was broken up pretty badly and I cried and felt bad. My uncle Jacob, Mothers brother, was sick in bed at our house at the time and said "don't cry when I get well I'll fix your wagon, but he died shortly after that time and I don't remember whether the wagon was ever repaired or not.

The foregoing was found in a legal tablet, and due to the fact it was written in pencil it could not be photo copied. It was written in Dad's hand writing.

Reid K. Larsen
April 11, 1979